

Recreation Advisory Board
Tuesday, September 25, 2019
Senior Citizen Center
7 PM
Final Minutes

1. Call to Order

Members Present: Dan Provost, Mike Wissler, Stephanie Papakonstantis, Jen Harrington, Brinn Sullivan, Steve Geiger and Val Castonguay; Molly Cowan, Select Board rep; and David Tovey and Greg Bisson of Parks and Rec. Ms. Papakonstantis called the meeting to order at 7 PM. The Board welcomed new member Steve Geiger.

2. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment at this meeting.

3. Minute Approval

- a. August 27, 2019

MOTION: Mr. Wissler moved to approve the minutes of August 27th, 2019 as submitted. Ms. Harrington seconded. All were in favor.

4. New Business

- a. Recap of Community Input Meeting and Recreation Complex Budget Discussion

Ms. Papakonstantis said there were disappointing attendee numbers, but those who attended were impactful individuals. They should talk about how to increase the public presence at the next meeting, where Tighe and Bond will be presenting the project. Ms. Harrington said that having the meeting on a Wednesday night could be an issue, and suggested having a session at 10 AM or on a Saturday. Mr. Bisson said he would need to see if extra sessions would add to the budget, since Tighe and Bond included only one input session. He suggested that if they had another session, they could go to Sterling Hill or 277 to better reach seniors. Ms. Castonguay suggested that even moving the time from 7 PM to 6 PM may help.

Ms. Sullivan suggested that lack of attendance could mean tacit approval from the public. The call to action may not be there yet. Mr. Provost suggested setting up a table at the Rec field to gather feedback, and Mr. Bisson said they're planning to do that.

Mr. Bisson said that Tighe and Bond are finalizing the footprint of the building before circulating the plan. They're looking at the building as a "stick build." He mentioned that Concord went with a prefab gymnasium for a savings of \$2 million; they also cut out air conditioning and put in a dehumidifier to save money. Concord wished they had an indoor walking track, and all they would have had to do was increase the height of the building and add an elevator, which was only \$500,000 extra. Mr. Wissler suggested reaching out to vendors via email for a cost estimate on the prefab gym. Mr. Giger asked why they couldn't have an all-steel building, and Mr. Wissler said they could but air conditioning is an issue, and it's harder to make the outside look good.

Ms. Papakonstantis asked if the building will be sustainable, since that could open up a whole new segment of voter support. Mr. Bisson said they're talking with Revision about solar panels. Unutil gave Concord \$50,000 towards their building for high efficiency boilers. They could collect rain water to help with water use. Ms. Papakonstantis asked if the lighting could be

set up for solar power too. Mr. Bisson said possibly, but the lighting would be phase 3. They're looking at a partnership with softball on the lighting, and there are lighting grants out there.

Ms. Sullivan said they could focus on the walkability of our community as part of the discussion around this project. Mr. Bisson said they could do more to help Public Works communicate about the walkability plan. Ms. Papakonstantis felt that this was outside the scope of this project, but Ms. Sullivan said they should think about a response for this kind of question. Mr. Bisson said the DPW had done a crosswalk analysis and they are fixing the one by the Rec Park. Mr. Wissler suggested adding sidewalks in front of the Rec Park as part of the site plan, in order to suggest that the town could increase the walkability by extending those sidewalks.

Ms. Papakonstantis said they should also have responses to questions about transportation for seniors as well as potential cost offsets such as a sale of the property at Court Street. They should check with RiverWoods regarding their fundraiser proceeds. Mr. Bisson said they're close to establishing the Friends group, they just have to file the 501C paperwork with IRS. This group could solicit downtown businesses to be part of the funding; since the group is a non-profit, it would be a tax write-off. Mr. Bisson said there's a Warrant Article to establish an expendable trust for the money the Friends raise.

Mr. Bisson described the timeframe of the Rec Park project. After it goes to vote, they will use the specs from the architect to solicit the design and engineering of the building. It would be at least a year before construction starts. This gives them time to move the tennis courts and start clearing, as well as submit an AOT permit for the alteration of terrain. Two wetlands were flagged on the property, but one is gone due to a drainage change. The other one is small, and they're looking at a drainage pond/retention area.

b. Annual Budget Review

Mr. Bisson discussed the proposed FY20 Parks and Rec budget. Rec is up 8.1%, mostly driven by the office admin going full time; this reduced the part time line but increased the full time by \$22,000, and the retirement cost goes up, although the person in this position doesn't take benefits. In the Senior Services line, everything done over the last year could be covered by the \$7,500, but they're also looking to expand the sponsorship program. The Parks side is up 4.3%, which is artificially low, since the reclassification work for one full time employee to become a foreman was part of the Human Resources budget. When comparing contractors as opposed to seasonal employees, they have a cost analysis, and they're going back to contracted services. Most seasonal employees in this area start at \$15-18 per hour; they tried at \$12 and had no qualified applicants. They could only afford seasonal employees from late May to late August, but contracted services can go from April to October.

c. Powder Keg Update

Mr. Bisson presented the progress on the Powderkeg Festival so far. They've sold 1,509 tickets, which is 500 tickets ahead of last year at this time. They're running commercials on the radio, an On Tap marketing campaign, and Facebook ads. Another email is planned to go out. There are 74 breweries signed up, more than in previous years. There are only 15 chili volunteers, versus 17 last year. He met with Police and Fire, and they have an emergency action plan. There will be a bigger Police presence and a SWAT team. They're also bringing in water barriers from Hampton, which can prevent cars from driving in. The Police are getting a text alert system called Rave, where people can sign up to get text alerts about a particular event, and this will be the first event where they roll it out.

Ms. Papakonstantis mentioned that there's still room for volunteers at the festival.

d. Senior Survey

Mr. Bisson presented a draft of the senior survey, which will go out October 1st. An intern put it together with some help. They plan to email 3,000 people, and need over 10% returned or the data isn't valid. They plan to promote it on social media and the town website. There are senior volunteers to help tabulate the responses. It takes 12 minutes to fill it out, but these are all data points they want to look at.

e. Program Update

Mr. Tovey said that they should look at extending the soccer sign-up, since they had a big rush of people try to sign up after the deadline, a week before the games started. Mr. Provost suggested it should align with the start of school and parents finding out about the program. Ms. Papakonstantis said they should be more flexible, because if they lose Rec families, they lose voters. There are ways to fit more kids, such as expanding four on four to five on five. Mr. Bisson countered that deadlines are deadlines, and they adjusted the teams four or five times to accommodate latecomers. There are more kids playing now than ever before, and 15 kids on the waitlist. Mr. Wissler said that even if you add a week to the deadline, they still won't sign up on time, and you need time to order the uniforms. Ms. Papakonstantis suggested they recycle uniforms. Mr. Bisson said that Hampton takes back t-shirts, and have their own laundry. Mr. Wissler said they have to think about the sponsor business cycle and keeping things current for the businesses. There was discussion of for-profit leagues poaching Exeter players, and Mr. Wissler said people will come back around to Rec, they should just stay the course.

Mr. Bisson said they're looking for a big holiday show band to play after the Festival of Trees.

Ms. Papakonstantis suggested they have a holiday of New Year's family dance.

Mr. Tovey said this year there are 20 soccer teams and 18 flag football teams. They opened up basketball registrations; this year they're moving the travel program to the Rim in Hampton.

5. Old Business

- a. Mr. Bisson said that he appreciates their minute taker, and mentioned that Ms. Roy is absent because she's in Baltimore for a Parks and Rec conference.

6. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Castonguay moved to adjourn. Mr. Wissler seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary